

Walla Walla TWI Site Visit April 23, 2003

## **Current Practices**

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) case managers provide orientation and open the job search component. DSHS case managers walk customers over to the Employment Security Dept. (ESD) resource room where staff review and update SKIES registration and schedule customers to attend orientation.

Orientation is presented by ESD at 8:30 every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Customers are informed of the program and participation requirements. Customers watch a 30 minute power point presentation that thoroughly explains TWI. Customers are given a portfolio containing a schedule of the job search modules they will be attending and a Passport to Employment pamphlet that they will use to track their progress toward completion of their competencies.

CASAS test is administered immediately after orientation.  
Per ESD staff, DSHS is not presenting the revitalized TWI orientation.

Assessment is done using Career Scope which assesses customer's work readiness skills and interests. Career Scope results are intended to be linked to the local labor market so customers can research targeted wage employers with the goal of finding the highest wage job possible.

Currently there is not a link between the Career Scope outcome and the local labor market. Labor Market Economic Analysis (LMEA) staff is responsible for designing a crosswalk to provide a link between Career Scope and the labor market. As of April 23, 2003 this crosswalk has not been completed. Without this link it is difficult for customers to target employers in the local labor market. This is an important piece of the Targeted Wage Initiative. LMEA staff have not returned messages left by Walla Walla staff asking when the crosswalk will be available.

## **Competencies**

Walla Walla offers open entry / open exit modules that customers are required to attend to attain their competencies. The TWI design allows customers the flexibility to attend modules at times that work best for them. The majority of customers attain the competencies by the end of their second week in job search. Customers are encouraged to attain all competencies as soon as possible.

Progress of competencies is tracked on their passport and documented in e-JAS notes. They completed competencies consist of an assessment, a success plan, skills identification, master application, resume, cover letter, 60 second commercial, and interview practice in addition to other job clubs they have attended.

Weeks three – eight of job search:

In week three, or upon completion of competencies, customers begin contacting employers and are required to make 15 contacts each week with the focus on getting

the best possible wage job. Customers participate in job search activities including job club, workshops, and hiring events.

Customers are required to attend job club once a week at the WorkSource office. The employer contact log is reviewed weekly at this time. One WorkFirst staff is stationed at WorkSource who conducts Career Scope assessments and the job clubs. This person also reviews job orders and makes job referrals when appropriate.

The business liaison conducts the job club module “Employer Expectations and Dress for Success”. This gives him a chance to get to know the customers and be more familiar with them when doing job development activities, and developing On the Job Training (OJT) agreements, and setting up hiring events / job fairs.

The business liaison arranges for local employers to be guest speakers in job club. There have not been any job fairs held since the start of TWI. Three employers have held hiring events at their business site. Hiring information not yet available.

- Marcus Whitman Hotel – twenty-five customers applied for work
- Cascade Fishing (job is in Alaska) five applied
- Cliff Star juice company accepted resumes

TWI plan states the business liaison will coordinate hiring events and job fairs monthly.

### **Evaluations**

In weeks four, eight and twelve customers are evaluated using the evaluation questions in CATS. At the time of evaluations, staff make and document recommendations based on the customers participation.

In the eighth week of job search customers are advised they will now need to seek and accept a minimum wage job and no longer focus on higher wage positions.

Customers continue to participate in job search activities including job club, workshops, and hiring events.

### **Statistical Rollup**

Staff provided TWI statistics: to date there have been 169 customers enrolled in TWI and 33 who have entered employment. See attached statistical rollup for more details.

### **Stated Best Practices**

Staff say the flexibility of offering open entry / open exit modules for customers has been a major positive change in service delivery. Customer attendance has shown an increase in participation. Instead of customers being required to attend a five day workshop and having to start over if they miss a day, customers now have the freedom to continue if they happen to miss one without starting over again.

Customers are better prepared for job search and often take the first job offered, not necessarily the targeted wage job which may not be available at that time.

## **Surveys**

- Customer Surveys – there were not many customers available during this visit. Three customers completed the survey, and the majority of the answers received a positive response stating customers feel the services they receive are helping them find employment. The question asking if local labor information was helpful did not receive high remarks.
- Staff Surveys – Staff believe customers participating in TWI are better prepared and their confidence level is higher. Staff is requesting the new Customer Services screen in CATS to use as a tracking tool, and would like to know when it will be available.
- Staff uses and like the four, eight & twelve week evaluation process in CATS.

## **Staff Concerns**

- Customers who do not participate as instructed are referred back to DSHS, customers are then recycled back to ESD. Result is many customers who float in the system. ESD staff report that case managers place customers who have been referred back for non participation immediately back into job search. Case managers say they have been advised not to put customers into sanction as it does not look good for their numbers.
- Walla Walla has several customers participating in job search on part time basis. Staff are frustrated with lack of services provided by WPLEX. The evaluations and updates are not being done and they show up on Walla Walla reports as overdue. The WPLEX staff who is assigned to Walla Walla says it makes more sense for the services to be provided by staff in the local office, even though it is a WPLEX customer.

## **Changes to TWI Implementation Plan**

Staff states there have not been changes to their plan other than minor adjustments to enhance customer flow and resolve workload issues.

## **Partner Involvement**

DSHS refers some customers directly to Blue Mountain Action Council for Community Jobs positions prior to sending them to ESD for job search.

The local colleges do not have any short term training available for customers and have not taken part in the educational assessment of customers as was agreed for TWI.

## **TWI Case Record Review**

Prior to the onsite visit, ten customers participating in full time job search were randomly selected from the fifty-four customers actively reporting in daily.

The customers reviewed have been on TANF for the following number of months: 64, 58, 57, 43, 23, 22, 20, 15, 11, 02.

## Employability Assessment

Eight of the ten customers have completed an assessment using Career Scope.

Staff documentation on the two customers not receiving an assessment states:

- JAS ID# 82729 "Tiara started her job search before the TWI Modules were started. Even though she was referred back to her case manager and placed back in JS on 3-12-03, it was decided to let her continue with her job search and attend Job Club." This customer has been on TANF 57 months and would benefit from the assessment.

- JAS ID# 80783 "The Work Skills Evaluation Workshop was not completed because he completed the week long workshop previously and was scheduled for the modules for his job search at this time through TWI."

This customer has been on TANF 43 months, as of April 23, 2003 still has not completed the competencies.

## Success Plan

- One customer had not created a Success Plan, although documentation at four week evaluation states the plan is in the portfolio.
- Three customers completed their plan prior to receiving an employability assessment. The plan should reflect the outcome of the assessment.
- Steps in the text box outline participation requirements instead of the customer's steps to employment.

During goal setting a success plan is created. This plan reflects the participation requirements for the customer. Once all of the competencies have been attained customers are encouraged to update their success plan.

Recommend customers update their success plan after completing the assessment and local labor market research. Success plans are reviewed at the four week evaluation.

## Competencies

The majority of customers completed their competencies prior to the third week in job search. Concern observed by reviewer is the order the modules are taken. Some customers are assigned to complete their resume and master applications before they have identified their skills. Also, some customers complete their success plans prior to the Career Scope assessment. See the following examples:

- JAS ID# 82729 (57 months on TANF), been in job search since 3-12-03 has not completed the Job Search Competencies.
- JAS ID# 80783 (43 months on TANF) Documentation states all Job Search Competencies were completed, but the customer has not attended the employability assessment which is one of the competencies.
- JAS ID# 123708 (64 months on TANF) staff documented in CATS that customer completed competencies on 4-10-03, but the Success Plan had not been done.

**Evaluations**

Four week evaluations – all cases reviewed had been completed using CATS. None of the customers reviewed had been in job search long enough to receive an eight week or a twelve week evaluation. The weekly review takes place in job club.

**Customer Engagement**

Records indicate staff document non-participation of customers and document the reason for referring customers back to DSHS.